

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 13-22 are pending in the instant application.

Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 17-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,326,230 to Pain et al. (hereinafter Pain) in view of Applicant's Allegedly Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter AAAPA). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Applicant herein provides a certified translation of the priority document, and thereby avoids Pain. This application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 154130/1998 filed on June 3, 1998. A certified English translation of the priority document accompanies this response. Pain was filed on January 5, 2000, and claims priority to United States Provisional Application No. 60/115,190, filed on January 6, 1999. Therefore, the earliest possible priority date for Pain, which is respectfully not conceded, is January 6, 1999, which is after the filing date of the priority application for the present application. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Pain is not prior art with respect to the present invention, and it is therefore requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 5, 6, 15, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Pain in view of AAAPA and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,903,01 to Lee et al. (hereinafter Lee). Applicant respectfully traverses on the same grounds presented above, namely that Pain is not prior art with respect to the present application.

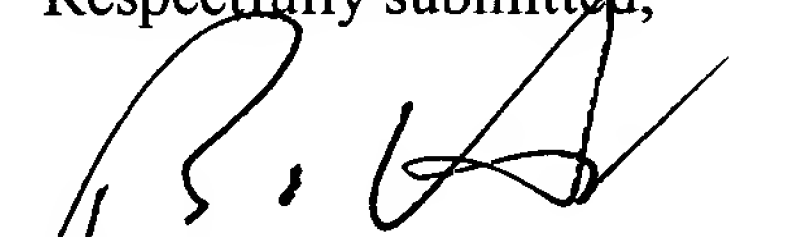
CONCLUSION

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance, as well as those claims dependent therefrom. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited.

However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper, not fully covered by an enclosed check, may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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